

Dr. FOWLERS
SERMON

Preached at

BOW-CHURCH,
ON THE
FAST-DAY.

April the 16th 1690.

PILKINGTON, Maior, &c.

*Cur. Special, tent, apud Dom. Mansional.
Domini Maior. Die Lunæ, xxi^o Die
Aprilis, 1690. Annoq; Regni, Regis
& Regina, Willielmi & Mariæ,
Angliæ, &c. Secundo.*

THIS COURT doth desire
Dr. Fowler to Print his Ser-
mon, Preached at St. Mary
le Bow, the 16th. of this Instant
April, 1690. before the Lord
Maior, Aldermen, and Citizens
of this City.

Wagstaffe.

A E. 10. 5

S E R M O N

Preached at

BOW - CHURCH,

April the Xvith. 1690:

Before the



LORD MAIOR,

AND

Court of Aldermen,

AND

CITIZENS of LONDON.

Being the

FAST - DAY.

By EDWARD FOWLER, D.D.

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SERMON

CHURCH

LORD MILLER

AND

ST. JOHN'S

AND

CITIZENS LONDON

412:90

YAC

To the Right Honourable,
Sir Thomas Pilkington,
LORD MAIOR
Of the CITY of LONDON:
AND THE
Court of Aldermen.

Right Honourable,

SINCE Your Favourable Acceptance of this Sermon,
bath Produced Your Order for my making it thus Pub-
lick, I do here Humbly Present You with it: In
Composing whereof it was my whole Aym and Endea-
vour, to promote as well as I was able, the Proper Business, and
that which ought to be the only Design of Publick Days of Hu-
miliation. Namely, the Atoning of the Divine Displeasure, by
so Penitent a Sense of our Personil Sins, and the Sins of our
Nation that cry aloud for Vengeance, as is followed with the For-
saking of them, and with hearty Endeavours, in our several
Stations, to be Instrumental as much as in us lies, towards a
General Reformation. To which, I doubt, there never was in
any People a more Obstinate Aversness, than is at this present to
be observed among us. The Consideration whereof makes the
hearts of Good Men Ake to think, what at last may become of us,
after the Wonderful Things God bath from time to time, and
now of late, done for us. It can be at no time Excuseable, but
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The Epistle Dedicatory, &c.

is on Fasting-days Unpardonable, to be Mealy-mouth'd, and Shy of justly Representing the Untoward State we are in, with the true Cause thereof; or of impartially Enumerating and Exposing our Reigning Sins; or to be sparing in Reproving those Vices and Follies, which are grown so Popular, as with very many among us to pass for Virtues. And the only Apology I shall make to those, who may happen to be Offended at several Passages in the Applicatory Part of this Discourse, is, that if we spare to speak now, we may for ever hold our Peace. But the Truth is, We are under no small Discouragement to hope for Success upon those men, who stand in most need of Plain-dealing; since long Experience assures us, that these have made themselves Sermon-Proof. Yet however, Whether they will Hear, or whether they will Forbear, there is great Satisfaction in having faithfully done our Duty, and discharged our Consciences.

Now that God would Multiply His Blessings, upon this Great and Renowned City; and especially on Yourselves, who (under Their Majesties) have the Chief Government thereof: And make You Happy Instruments in the diverting of His Judgments from it, by Vigorously Setting Yourselves to the Suppressing of the Vices that Abound in it (which will be Your Crown and Glory at the Great Day) is the Hearty Prayer of,

Right Honourable,

Your most Humble Servant,

Edward Fowler.

A
SERMON
Preach'd before the
LORD MAIOR
AND THE
Court of Aldermen, &c.

Hosea 11. 8.

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together.

THere is nothing to be affirmed of Almighty God with more absolute Certainty, than that the making of his Creatures happy, according to their Capacities of Happiness, is highly pleasing to him. *Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me:*

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That I am the Lord which exercise Loving-kindness, Judgment and Righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight saith the Lord, Jer. 9. 24. The Divine Nature is all Love and Benignity: *God is Love*, saith the Apostle *St. John*. The *Sun* and *Light* may be as soon separated, as *God* and *Goodness*, the *Deity* and *Loving-kindness*: Nor is that Glorious Lamp of Heaven more free in communicating Light and Heat to the several Parts of the World, according as they are capable of receiving them, than is *God* in spending the benign Rays and Influences of his Goodness upon his whole Creation, according as 'tis qualified and disposed for them. And whensoever he withdraweth the Light of his Countenance and Fatherly Care from any People, whensoever he turns their Joy into Heaviness, and puts them into unhappy Circumstances, it is long of *themselves*, not of the least Defect of Goodness in *Him*; 'tis wholly owing to their rendering themselves unmeet to be any longer Partakers of his Grace and Favour: So that he cannot act the Part of an Indulgent Father towards *all* sorts of men, and do like an infinitely Wise and Holy Being, who is above all things concerned to promote the Interest of Righteousness and Universal Goodness in the Universe. God is ever a like Good in himself, and a like willing to do good to all, as the *Sun* is equally full of Light at all times, and a like free in displaying his Beams: And therefore, as it is not to be ascribed to any deficiency in the *Sun*, that we are every night in darkness, but to the *Earth's* interposing between *it* and *us*; so is it not, I say, to be imputed to any want of Goodness in *God*, that Nations or particular Persons are at any time deprived of his wonted Protection, but they must blame *themselves* for it. *Your Iniquities*

Iniquities (saith the Prophet) have seperated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his Face from you, &c. Isaiah 59. 2.

In short, God as *God* is always inclined to do good to his Creatures, but considering Him as *Governour of the World*, he is too often under a necessity of being very severe; though indeed he may be truly said to do *good* in inflicting *Evil*, nay, he designeth herein the *greatest* good; he aimeth at the good of *their Souls* whom he *punisheth*, till they grow obdurate and are incorrigible: But he ever designeth a *general* good in the Judgments he executeth, *viz.* The Reformation of those *Corrigible* People who are Observers of them, or made acquainted with them. *When thy Judgments are abroad in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness, Isaiah 26. 9.* Which is as much as to say, Mens learning of Righteousness is Gods Design in his Judgments, and they are very powerful means in order thereto, in their own nature.

Now *this* being the true State of the Case, it is apparent, that God Almighty inflicts his Judgments, not out of *Free Choice*, but from *Constraint*, and with a kind of *unwilling willingness*. And this he hath *expressly* told us, *Lam. 3. 31, &c. The Lord will not cast off forever, but though he cause grief, yet will he have Compassion, according to the multitude of his Mercies: For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.* And the *Pathetical Words*, which I have chosen for my present Subject, may give us as great an assurance hereof, as any Text in the *Bible*; and before I will repeat them, I'll give you an Account of the *Occasion* of them.

In the *Four First Verses* of this Chapter, we find God Almighty, by his Prophet, making a sad Complaint of the *Israelites* inexpressibly Vile Returns to him, for wonderful Engagements he had laid upon them. *When Israel was a Child, then I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them, (or as Moses and the Prophets called them to Piety, and the Reformation of their Lives, so they despised their Calls) they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burn'd Incense to Graven Images: I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their Arms; but they knew not that I healed them.* Or I took the same Care of these People, from their very beginning to be a Nation, that tender Mothers take of their *weak Children*; but they never would be persuaded to lay it to heart. *I drew them with the Cords of a man, with Bands of Love (or with the greatest Expressions of Love and Kindness; which is the best and most proper Method to be taken with Free Agents) and I was to them as they that take off the Toke on their Jaws, and I laid meat unto them.* Or I delivered them out of the most miserable Bondage, and gave them a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; and fed them in a Miraculous Manner in their Journey thither, through the Barren Wildernesse.

And Verse 5, 6. we find their gracious Father so highly provoked by their long intolerable Behaviour towards him, as to pronounce very terrible Threats against them, *viz. They shall not return into the Land of Egypt, (or they shan't be suffered to flee to the Egyptians, who were now their great Friends, and on whom they relyed more than on the Divine Safe-guard) but the Assyrian shall be their King (he shall subdue*

subdue them, and carry them away Captive) *because they refused to return ; or to return to me, after so many earnest Calls. And the Sword shall abide in his Cities, and shall consume his Branches, or choice Men, because of their own Counsels.* Because to save themselves, they take forbidden Courses, making wicked Alliances ; and are perpetually revolting, and back-sliding from me ; as it follows *verse 7. And my People are bent to back sliding from me, though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.* Though I sent my Prophets from time to time, to admonish them to repent and amend their lives, yet they have generally still refused to give Glory to me, by harkening to these Admonitions, but still persist obstinately in their Rebellions against me.

But we see, after all this, as highly as they had incensed the great God against them, and as dreadfully Threatned, as they *now* were by Him ; He yet *farther* makes good, when one would *least* expect He should, *that* Saying of the Son of Syrach, *As is His Majesty so is his Mercy :* This He doth in the Words of *my Text ; How shall I give thee up Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee, or deliver thee up, Israel ? How can I find in mine heart to be as bad as my Word in Executing such fearful Threatnings ? How shall I make thee as Admah ? How shall I set thee as Zeboim ? How shall I be able to make an utter end of thee, as I did of those two, and their neighbouring Cities ? Mine heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together.* My Bowels do yearn towards you *still*, as little as you deserve the least Compassion. I feel my Nature strongly inclined to spare you yet a while longer, and to give you a longer space for Repentance,
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and I *will* comply with this inclination: As it follows in the next verse. *I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; or I will not do it yet; for I am God and not man (my Compassion is inconceivably beyond what a Mortal man is capable of) the Holy one in the midst of thee; and I will not Enter into the City; or into the Head City Samaria; I will not Enter into it in an Hostile manner, to make a ruinous Heap of it.*

I say the words of my Text, with the verse following, contain a most gracious Declaration of Almighty God, that he would hold his Hand yet for some *longer time*, from destroying these People (after His Patience seemed to be perfectly spent, by the Threatnings just before uttered) if happily they might at *last* come to *themselves*, and return to their *right minds*. But we find that these *Desperate Wretches* would not to the very *last* be in the least wrought upon, either by the most scaring *Menaces*, or astonishing *Patience*, or the most melting and indearing Expressions of Divine *Pity*; and therefore in Conclusion, *the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost*; they were carried away Captive by the King of *Assyria*, and he made a *clean riddance of them*: For to *this day* they never returned, but are *quite lost* among the *Gentiles*. Where as *Judah* returned, after *seventy Tears*, from her Captivity under the King of *Babylon*.

But we see that God *here* Expresseth, the greatest averfeness imaginable, to the bringing of utter Ruin upon this Nation, if consistently with the Honour of His Laws, and the Wisdom, and Righteousness of His Government, it could have been avoided. From whence

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we learn, That nothing less than apparent Necessity can prevail with the infinitely good God, to make his Creatures miserable ; and much more, those whom He hath taken into *Covenant with Himself*, His *visible Church* and *Professors of the true Religion* : And this will farther appear, by these following Considerations.

First, God's Earnest and most Pathetical exciting of sinners to *Turn and Repent*, that *Iniquity may not be their ruin*, is of it self sufficient to assure us hereof. His sending His Prophets and Messengers to cry aloud in their Ears, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, Why will ye dye ?* doth assure us of this. The Bible is full of Calls to sinners of this Nature, enforced with Gracious Promises to those who shall obey these Calls, and as scaring Threatnings against those who will not obey them.

Secondly, 'Tis God's ordinary Method to give *Warnings* to sinners before He strikes ; and what can His meaning therein be, but that He may *not* strike, that Repentance and Reformation may stay his Hand, and prevent the Blow ? How many inspired men did He heretofore send, upon this *Sole Errand* ? Thus did He give warning to the *Old World* by the *Preaching of Noah*, and his *Preparing an Ark for the saving of Himself and His Household*, before He overwhelmed it with an Universal Deluge. And this Ark was *Noah* in preparing for *Forty Years* together, that so it might give the longer Warning ; for otherwise, 'tis likely he might have finish'd it, in a much shorter time.

How long, and how frequently had both the *ten Tribes* and the *two*, Warnings sent them by the *Prophets*,

phets, before they were carried away Captive? And what an Awakening Warning had the *two Tribes*, from the fulfilling of the Threatnings against the *ten*, to prevent the fulfilling of the *like* against *themselves*?

Nor did God thus concern Himself to give Warnings only to the People of *Israel*, but He did the like also to *Heathen Nations*. As the *Moabites*, the *Syrians*, the *Egyptians*, the *Tyrians*, the *Ninevites*, &c. I say, the Threatnings sent to all these, were designed for *Warnings*. God's meaning in them was nothing less, than *to torment them before the time*. They were sent to Rouze sleepy Souls out of their security, and to awaken them to a *speedy Repentance*, that so there might be no necessity of *making good* His Threatnings; which the *Ninevites* found by happy Experience. Well was it for *them* that they were so Threatned, since they had been *actually* destroyed, had they not first been *threatned* with destruction: Because *then* they would not have *repented* as they did.

And the *Design* of those *other* Threats, which were *fulfilled to the utmost*, was the very same with the design of those pronounced against *Nineveh*; as the Prophets do abundantly assure us. *Conditions* we plainly perceive were *implied* in such, as were most *absolutely exprest*; as what Threatning could be *expressed more absolutely*, than that against *Nineveh*?

Even our Saviour's so punctually Predicting the *Destruction of Jerusalem*, with the heavy Calamities leading to it, and the *strange Prodigies* which gave notice of the near approach of it, we are to reckon
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in the number of *Warnings*; although the Destruction of that City was *irreverfibly* decreed, for the *murthering of the Lord of Glory* there, which was at hand; as also were the Miseries that befel the obdurate *Jews*. *That Prediction* and *those Prodigies* were *Warnings* to the *fincere Christians* that ~~they~~ might escape, as accordingly they *did*, the dreadful Judgment: And likewise to *those* who were not hardened to the utmost degree among the *Jews*, that they might *Repent* of their Infidelity, and embrace the Gospel, and so might *escape* too.

And as I have shewed, how God did of *old* give Fore-warnings by the *Prophets* of great Judgments, so I think it no hard matter to make it out, that He hath given Prefages in all these *latter* Ages, by very significant Providences, and extraordinary Events, which our *Saviour* calls *Signs of the times*, before especially Great Revolutions, or General and Extraordinary Calamities. History hath furnish'd us with abundance of Instances of this nature, and our *own* Histories with not a *few*, that have been observed in *these Kingdoms*. And we may, if we please, call to mind several of these Prefages, which have happened in our *own* time, before great Judgments. But this is a Topick, which the Scepticism of the Age will scarce bear the handling. But I can't forbear saying, that I much fear, we have some *ill-boding Signs*, at this *present*, of God's sending, *viz.* Instances of a marvellous *Infatuation*, no whit, I doubt, inferiour to that we observed a while ago with no less *pleasure* than *wonder* in our *Adversarys*. I say, at this *present* we have Instances of *such an Infatuation*, as all must needs observe who are not in the number of the *Infatuated*;

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and which seems perfectly unaccountable, if it be not *Judicial*. No doubt the *wiser* and *better* sort, ought to look on these as Warnings designed for *them* especially, if not *only*.

Thirdly, 'Tis Gods usual Course to try a wicked People with *Lighter* Judgments, before He brings the *Heaviest* upon them. We have a Remarkable Place to this purpose, *Amos* 4. 6, &c. Here God minds his People, *First*, that he had given them great scarcity of *Bread*, and yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. *Next*, that he had given them the like of *Water*, and yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. *Next*, that he had sent upon their *Vineyards* and *Olive-yards*, &c. *blasting Winds*, and *devouring Insects*, and yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. *Next*, that he had sent among them a *sweeping Plague*, and moreover the *Heavier Judgment* (as King *David* accounted it) of a *bloody War*, and yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And, by the way, you can scarce need to be minded, that *these three last* were *our* Late Calamities, and since they were I fear as much lost upon *us*, as they were on those *Jews*, we have the greater reason to attend to what follows in the *next* verse, which is a dreadful one indeed: *Therefore thus will I do unto thee O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Israel*. Which is as much as to say, seeing so many other Judgments have proved ineffectual to the Reforming of you, do you now expect some Fearful thing, which shall be *nameless*: Some Judgment far more dreadful than any that have hitherto fallen upon you; and therefore put your selves into a posture of defence, and
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see whether you are able to contend, and try it out with me.

And the Author of the *Book of Wisdom* tells us, that God dealt after the same manner, with the *Canaanites*, themselves ; that before they were for their Horrid Practices devoted to Destruction, *He Executed upon them his Judgments by little and little*, and by so doing, gave them place for Repentance, Ch. 12. 8, &c.

Fourthly, When God had determined to pour down the Vials of his Vengeance on a wicked People, He hath some times plainly intimated, that he did it not, till their wickedness was come up to such a Height as did necessarily call for them. For instance, When he was resolved on the destruction of the *old World*, he declared that the wickedness of man, was not only great upon the Earth, but so great, that every thought and imagination of his heart was only evil, and that continually : And that mankind was grown so horribly depraved, that it even Repented him that he had made man ; or he was become as hateful to him, as if he repented his Creating of him. God did not rain down Fire and Brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, before he had signified to his Servant Abraham, that the cry of their wickedness was come up unto him ; that it was great, and their sin very grievous. The reason he gave for his deferring the Destruction of the Amorites to the fourth Generation, was, that the Iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. And our Blessed Saviour supposeth, that there is a certain Measure and Proportion of wickedness, which sinners do come up to, before God is so severe, as to inflict the heaviest Judgments upon them, in those words

to the *Scribes and Pharisees* : *Fill ye up the measure of your Fathers*, Mat. 23. 32.

Fifthly, 'Tis likewise apparent, that God Almighty is most backward to the destroying of a wicked People, or putting them into miserable circumstances, till *necessitated*, in that he hath again and again declared his being diverted from so doing, by such Motives, as one would think could have but *very little* influence upon *such* a Being as *He* is, or rather *none at all*. As if (to speak with Reverence) he were glad of any *Excuse* for the longer sparing those, who had made themselves lyable to the stroke of his Justice.

1. A meer partial Humiliation, an Humiliation far short of true Repentance, hath been one of those Motives. Thus upon *Ahabs putting on Sackcloth, Fasting, and going Softly*, said God to the Prophet, *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself, because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, &c.* 'Tis said of Ahab, that *he sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his Wife stirred up*. And I need not recite unto you the abominable things he did, for which God threatened him by the Prophet *Elijah*, that *He would bring evil upon him, and take away his Posterity, and cut off from him, him that pisseth against the Wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel; and would make his House like the House of Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin*. 1 Kin. 21. 21, &c. And it follows ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard these words, that he rent his clothes, and put Sackcloth upon his Flesh, and Fasted, and went Softly,*

softly. Would any one have thought now, that this Humiliation of so *Vile* a man, could in the *least* have moved the Divine Compassion? We are not to think, that he only *acted a part*, and play'd the Hypocrite, in this Humiliation; for then he would have so much the *more* provoked God against him. But yet God knew that this his humbling himself, proceeded from meer *dread* of the Threatned Judgment; that there was no Detestation of his wicked doings at the bottom of it, and therefore that no Reformation would be produced by it: Yet it pleased the Almighty to shew how averse he was to great severity, by being wrought upon by so very imperfect an Humiliation as *this*, to the putting off the Execution of this Threatning till after *his* time. It follows *verses 28, 29.* *And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself, because he humbleth himself before me (because he doth not mock at this Threat, but so far humbleth himself as thou hast seen) I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his Sons days will I bring the Evil upon his House.* Which Threatning, we may suppose, had *this tacit Condition*; I will bring the evil in his *Sons* days, if another sort of Humiliation than the *Fathers* was, doth not prevent it.

Again, We have another instance like this of *Ahab*, *2 Chron. 12. 7, 8,* We read in the beginning of the Chapter, that *when Rehoboam had Establish'd the Kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the Law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.* And that in the *Fifth* Year of his Reign, *Shishack King of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed the Law of the Lord, with 1200 Chariots and 60000 Horsemen, &c.* And *ver. 5.* *Shemaiah came to Rehoboam*
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and the Princes of Judah, and said unto them : Thus saith the Lord, you have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you, in the hand of Shilhack. And what effect this terrible Message had upon them, we are told in the next words : Whereupon the Princes of Israel and the King humbled themselves, and they said, the Lord is Righteous. Now what could be expected less than this from them, under such frightful Apprehensions ; when they were in sight of so Formidable an Enemy, and when (as we read) they had already taken the Fenced Cities of Judah, and were come to Jerusalem ? And it appears by ver. 14. that this was but such a kind of Humiliation, as that of Ahab ; but, for all this, the next verse tells us, that when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, they have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured forth upon Jerusalem, by the hand of Shilhack : Nevertheless they shall be his Servants (or Tributaries to him) that they may know my service, and the service of the Kingdoms of the Countries, i. e. That they may feel the vast difference between My service, which they refuse, and the service of Foreign Nations. And again 'tis said, ver. 12. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether, and also in Judah things went well.

2. Another Motive by which God hath also been diverted from destroying a wicked People, is, the Prayers of a few good People, nay, of one good man. 'Tis said, *Psal. 106. 23. that God said he would destroy the Israelites, had not Moses his Chosen stood before him in the Breach, to turn away his wrath lest*
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he should destroy them. And there is a strange passage, *Ezek. 22. 30.* where God complains, that there was no one to be found to intercede for those, whom he had often threatned with Destruction. *I sought,* said he, *for a man among them, that should make up the Hedge, and stand in the Gap before me for the Land, that I should not destroy them ; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, &c.*

But to prevent the making an *ill use* of God's having been perswaded from executing the fierceness of his Wrath, by an *Humiliation short of Reformation*, or by the *Intercession of good People*, we are to know, that neither the *one* nor the *other* Motive will always do, nor is it fit they should. These *two* Motives have, no doubt, prevailed again and again for this Nation of *ours*, but it follows not, that therefore they shall *still* prevail; and the oftner they have so done, there is much the more danger, of their not doing so for the *future*. Besides, such Motives as these do only prevail for the longer *staving off* of Judgments, not the keeping them off for *altogether*. There was a time when God professed concerning his Antient People, That *though* Moses and Samuel stood before him, yet his mind could not be towards them, &c. *Jer. 15. 1.* And he said the like concerning the Intercession of Noah, Daniel and Job (those great Favourites of Heaven) that were they on the Earth again, it should nothing avail them, and that they should only deliver their own Souls by their Righteousness, *Ezek. 14. 14.*

3. We may see another Motive God laid hold on for the sparing the same *Rebellious Israelites*, *Deut.*

32. 27. *I said I would scatter them into Corners, I would make the Remembrance of them to cease from among men, were it not that I feared the Wrath of the Enemy, lest their Adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say their Hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this.* That is, were it not that I knew, they would take Advantage from the Destruction of my People, to bepride themselves the more in their own strength; and not look on themselves as the *Rods of mine Anger*, or Executioners of my Vengeance; and so their Destruction would lose the Force of an *Example* for the deterring of the Heathen from their wicked Practices. Were it not that I feared the Wrath of the Enemy: This is one of those many Examples we find in Scripture, of God's speaking to *Men* after the manner of *Men*.

4. We shall find another like this, *Ezek. 20. 14.* Where God saith, *I said I would pour out my Fury upon them in the Wilderness, to consume them; but I wrought for my Name's sake, that it should not be polluted among the Heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.* That is, that the Egyptians might not say, *That for Mischief he brought them out, to slay them in the Mountains, and to consume them from the Face of the Earth.* Which was the Motive used by *Moses* to prevail with God to turn from his fierce Wrath, and to repent of this Evil against his People, *Exod. 32. 12.*

But what could the Great God suffer, by the Enemies taking occasion from their destroying his People, to bepride themselves the more in their own strength, since (as the Psalmist speaks) *In the things wherein*

wherein they dealt most proudly, He is above them? And what Dammage could accrue to the Divine Majesty, from their Reproaches? Yet you see such Motives as *these* did stay God's Hand (seeing he had no better) from *their* Destruction, who had done all that lay in them, to draw down his Vengeance. And I say again, that such Motives as *these four* do plainly shew, that he is naturally extreamly averse, to the giving of sinners their due desert; and that, when he doth so, 'tis an effect of *Necessity*, rather than of *Free Choice*.

Sixthly, God's Infinite *Goodness*, and His Infinite *Greatness* too, do absolutely assure us of *this*. For taking pleasure in Destruction or Misery as *such*, is perfectly inconsistent with Goodness, and much more with Infinite Goodness; but to destroy or make miserable, when there is no Necessity in the case, is much the same thing, with delighting in Destruction and Misery as *such*. And again, *he* hath but a very sorry notion of Almighty God, who needs to be satisfied, that he hath innumerable *other* ways of procuring his own Pleasure, and therefore can not need to do it by any of His Creatures Destruction or Misery, were He *capable* of delighting himself therein.

Lastly, The many *Express* Declarations, which God hath made concerning this matter, do make us not to need any *Consequences* for a Proof hereof. You have heard that he hath Professed that, *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*. And since 'tis impossible for God to lye, this one Text ought to weigh down a thousand Objections, could the wit of man invent so many, against the truth of

this Doctrine. And again, from a great concern that we should not admit the least doubt of it, he hath so wonderfully condescended, as to back such Declarations with a *Solemn Oath*. *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* Ezek. 33. 11.

Again, We have God Almighty expressing a vehement *Wish*, that his people had *not* given him such Provocations, *Plal.* 81. 13, &c. *Oh that my People had harkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways, I should soon have subdued their enemies, &c.* But he could not wish this for any Good, his Creatures observance of his Laws could signify to himself; since 'tis no gain to him (as *Eliphaz* speaks) that we make our way perfect: And man cannot be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself.

Again, We farther find him expressing a very ardent *Wish*, that his people would *Cease* to give him Provocations; and that for *this* reason, that he might be under no necessity of making them miserable. This he doth, *Deut.* 5. 29. *Oh that there were such an heart in them! that they would fear me, and keep my Commandments always, that it may be well with them, and with their Children for ever.*

And what an astonishing Consideration is it, that the Infinite Majesty of God should stoop so low, as that he should express himself to *vile Dust and Ashes*; nay, to the most obdurate and hard-hearted Wretches in the World, after the manner he hath *here* done, in the words of our *Text*.

How

How shall I give thee up Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee Israel, &c ?

Now to make Application of what hath been Discoursed on these Words.

First, **W**E Learn from thence, what strange Folly, or rather desperate Madnels, doth lodge in the hearts of Sinful men. Lord ! that they should be such deadly Enemies to themselves, that they should be so resolutely bent upon plucking down Ruine and Misery upon their own heads, Ruine and Misery both in *this* World and in that *to come*, when God hath done all that could reasonably be desired, and much more than ought to have been expected from him, to prevent their being Miserable, and to make them Happy both here and hereafter. What reason have we, when we consider *this*, to take up that wish of the Prophet Jeremy ? *Oh that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night !* This sottishness of sinners can never be enough Lamented, nor can we sufficiently Wonder at it. There is nothing to be observed in all Gods Creation so Unaccountable, so Amazing. There is no sort of Creatures under the Cope of Heaven, besides wretched *Mankind* (which *alone* is indued with Understanding and Liberty) but do provide as well as they are able for their own safety ; but are so concerned for their own welfare, as not to expose themselves, without apparent necessity, to the least

D 2 danger.

danger. A poor *Bird* needs no other warning to avoid a snare, than the *fight* of it; *in vain* (saith the Wise man) *is the Net spread in the fight of any Bird*. But unhappy *Man* will run into the Pit, with his eyes open. For the gratifying of a brutish Appetite for a *little little* while, he'll adventure being utterly ruined and undone, both Soul and Body, in this World, and to all Eternity. And that, though God himself by his holy Word, and by innumerable Examples of his Justice, and by the *Feeling* he often gives him of the evil of sin, takes the most effectual course thoroughly to convince him, of the horrible Madness of wilfully transgressing his Righteous Laws. *What* words are significant enough to give this its *due* Aggravation! *Be astonished O ye Heavens at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very desolate*: As the Prophet cries out in this same case, *Jerem. 2. 12.*

Secondly, Will sinners *still* persevere in this their Madness? Will they *never* return to their wits more? *Remember this, and shew your selves men; bring it again to mind O you Transgressors*. Do I say, shew your selves *Men*, as the Prophet did; I say farther, shew that you are not more *Brutish* than the very *Brutes*. That you are not inferiour to the *Beasts which perish*, in Prudence or Sagacity, in Ingenuity or good Nature. Can we take our selves for *men*, and not flee those infinite dangers, to which sin exposeth us, by sincerely applying our selves to the use of those means which God hath appointed, for the avoiding and subduing of it? Nay, can we believe our selves a better sort of Creatures, than the very *Devils*, and not be lead to Repentance, by God's unspeakable Goodness, and his strange Patience,
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and Long-suffering towards us, and his mighty unwillingness to destroy us, while there is any hope?

O let not us of *this City*, and *this Kingdom*, be acting the *Israelites* still over and over, those fearfully hardened People who had even *made a Covenant with death, and were at an Agreement with Hell*; and were resolved upon it, what ever they suffered in *this* life, nay, though they were damn'd for it too, in the life *to come*, they would not repent of their wicked doings, and return to God; let him invite them never so graciously, or address himself to them never so pathetically. Shall we, I say, *still* tread in the steps of those Sons of *Belial*, and be immovably bent upon holding on in our Rebellion against Heaven, as *they* were? Did *they* fare so well, as that we need not be scared from following their Example? Shall we mock the Messengers of God, as *they* did? Shall we despise his Word, and all his Warnings, as *they* did; till at length the wrath of the Lord brake forth against *us*, as it did against *them*, until there be no Remedy? Truly if so, we are more desperate than *they* were, because we are fore-warned of the dismal consequence of such doings, by their fearful Example; what things happened to *them* were for *Ensamples to us*, saith *S. Paul*, and *they* are written for our *Admonition, upon whom the ends of the World are come*, 1 Cor. 10. 11. But especially shall *we, then*, be more mad than *they*, because our Christianity hath furnish't us with far more powerful Motives to obedience, and greater Helps and Advantages, as great as *theirs* were, than *they* had: And in no Church in *Christendom*, is the Gospel more truly Preached, or better means of Grace afforded than

than in the Church of *England*: Which is no small Aggravation of *our* sins.

How often hath God *repented him of the Evil*, that in all appearance, he was *just* doing unto us, and which we had all the Reason in the world, to look for from him? Look we to it, that he be not constrained by *us*, as he was by the perverse *Jews*, to say, *I am weary of repenting*; for when once he is so, those who have tyred out his Patience, shall assuredly find it a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God*. And though he should still dissipate black Clouds hanging over our heads, and shew infinite Compassion *still* to our Un-reformed Nation, as a *Nation*; yet Impenitents in their own Persons shall, instead of faring the *better*, fare much the *worse* for it.

But let not our Nation, or our Church either, fancy it self deeper in the Divine Favour, than were the *Israelites*. Though we would gladly hope, that those Words of *Manoah's Wife*, may be applyed to our present Case, *viz. If the Lord had pleased to kill us, he would not have received a Burnt-Offering and Meat-Offering at our hands; neither would he have shewed us all these things; nor would as at this time have told us such things as these*. If the Lord had designed at last to *Un-Church us*, or to make us a *Prey to our Enemies*, he would not, we may hope, have done such Great Things for us in Answer to the Prayers of good People among us. He would not, from time to time, have so wonderfully discovered the *deep-laid Plots of Rome* against us; nor so strangely have baffled all the Attempts of our Popish Adversaries,

versaries, for the reducing of us to our Old Bondage; nor so infatuated the Crafty *Jesuites*, as he did, in the last short Reign; and *turned the Counsels of those Achitophels into folly*; nor by so many Amazing Providences have sent us Deliverance, when we were on the very Brink of Ruine. And because we had so few Revolters to *Popery*; and many who were *Bad* enough in other Respects, shewed a great Zeal against the Superstitions and gross Corruptions of that Religion: for *these* Reasons we have, I say, Incouragement to hope, that God will deal nothing so severely with us, as he did with the *Ten Tribes*, nor as he did with the *Two* neither. Yet considering the *many things he hath* (for all this) *against us*, it will be very strange, if we should see those happy days, which we *lately* were apt to promise our selves, without first more severely smarting for *these* things, than we have yet done. And especially, when we reflect upon the Requital God hath had, for our late *most wonderful Deliverance*, we may tremble to think, how he must needs resent it, and how he *may* punish it.

Our Church and Nation have had *Two* such Deliverances, within the space of *Thirty Years*, as perhaps never any People in the World, except the *Jews*, were blest with, in one whole Age: But as to the *Former* of these Deliverances, I mean that in 1660, I need not say how lamentably it was abused; nor need you, sure, be minded, what dreadful Judgments did ensue upon the Abuse of it; and which came very thick upon one another: And in which *this City* had the far deepest share, as it had also in that *Guilt*, which brought them down upon us. Nor need I tell you, what *Reason* we had to expect, *Two far heavier*

heavier Judgments than any we have met with, or than altogether, viz. Popery and Slavery: Towards the Introducing of which, there was made so great a Progress in the Former of the Two last Reigns, and which was apace perfecting in this last.

But in the Mount was the Lord seen: As loudly as our high Provocations called for these Judgments, and such Concomitants of them, as have made the French Protestants the most deplorably miserable of all People, our infinitely Gracious God seemed to Address Himself to Us, as he did to the Israelites in our Text, and to say; *How shall I give you up? How shall I deliver you into your Enemies hands? How shall I make you as your poor Brethren of France? How shall I set you, as your Fellow-Protestants of Piedmont? Mine heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together.* Nay, he did not onely not execute the fierceness of his Anger, when we looked for nothing more than that he should; but he sent us Deliverance, while we onely Feared the foresaid Calamities; for comparatively very few of us had Felt any thing: Though we saw too many Præludia to Arbitrary Government and Popish Cruelty, yet, I say, but a small Number comparatively had felt the least Smart of either.

In short, God Almighty by a Series or Train of very Admirable Providences, was graciously pleased to Rescue both our Religion and our Laws, from the Destruction Threatened them, and near Effected. He set a Protestant King, with a Protestant Queen, upon the Throne. He blest our Church with a Nursing Father, and (which is a great Rarity in these Nations)

tions) with a *Nursing Mother* too: And he gave us these never to be sufficiently Valued Blessings, without putting us to the expense either of Blood or Treasure.

But hath he been *better* Required for *this*, than he was for the *former* Deliverance? Alas no, no whit better. How many of us, *whose mouths were filled with laughter, and whose tongues with singing*, upon their first receiving it, did as much in a little time *slight* it, did quickly grow *weary* of it? *Some*, because *themselves* or their *Party* did not happen to be such Gainers by it, as they look't they should have been. *Others*, in regard of the *Taxes* which have followed upon it; though they can't but acknowledge, that 'twould have been a good Bargain but the *other day*, to have parted with *one Half* of their Estates; to secure the *other Half*: And they must needs also be sensible, that these Taxes are no whit Heavier, than the miserable Condition of our Fellow-Subjects of *Ireland*, do necessarily call for; and which one would have thought, no sincere Protestant could have grudged at, for the Delivering of that oppressed Kingdom, since our *Own* Deliverance did cost us nothing. And how many did so soon lose all sense of the Divine Goodness herein, because it came so *Early*, and the evils they are delivered from, were only, as I now said, Feared, not Felt by them. Although, truly Ingenuous Minds would esteem this Deliverance, as much the *Greater* upon this account, and think themselves obliged to be so much the *more* thankful for it.

Nay, how many of us would never account this *any* Deliverance, and look upon it as *worse* than
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none? And if we are capable of understanding the Signs that too too many now make, which I think are *Broad* enough to be easily understood, we must conclude they are *all a gog* upon returning into *Egypt* again; and that they are so *very sick* of the present Government (whose greatest fault perhaps is, that 'tis too kind to *them*) that they would run, to be rid of it, the most apparent danger, or rather are content to fall into the (humanely speaking) *inevitable necessity*, of wearing the Iron Yoke, and toying in the Brick-kilns of so cruel a *Pharoah*, as never had his Match in the Land of *Egypt*. How well the Obedience of these Gentlemen, as mightily Passive as they would have us think 'tis, is able to brook King *Lewis* his Government, I much Question; but never was there a more *absurd Phancy*, than to think it a duty to expose *that* to the most imminent danger, which is the only Design of Government, *viz.* the *Safety of the Community* (the Safeguard of both its Spiritual and Temporal Interests) for the sake of *any* Person or Persons whatsoever. Or that the Obligation of an Oath of *Allegiance* is so Unlimited, as that the *Safety of the Community*, which is the first and principal Intention of *such Oaths*, must be Sacrificed to it. If *this* be found Doctrine, those ought to be accounted the greatest Enemies in the World to Humane Society, who were the *first Inventors of Oaths of Allegiance*. Nor can there be a Leuder Instance of Uncharitableness, than to tax *those*, as these men do, with *Apostasy* and *Perjury*, who can't be convinc'd that so Incredible and Destructive a Notion as this is, is a Doctrine of the Gospel, or of the *Church of England*.

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In what I have now said, I am far from designing to reflect on *any*, who do *modestly* dissent from us about the Lawfulness of the *New Oaths*; and whose Virtuous and Pious Conversations oblige us to judge them, truly Consciencious in this dissent. I have a more tender regard to Conscience, than to be severe upon *such* Persons. I hope in *time* they may be satisfied in this great Point; but in the mean time, it greatly becomes us to treat *such* with all Christian Candour.

But to *proceed* on our present Sad Argument: Whereas Almighty God by the *Psalmist* saith, *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*; and cannot dispense with *this* return of Gratitude for his Answering our Prayers: And whereas he hath frequently assured us, that he expects to be Glorified by our *Lives*; and that the praises of our *Lips* whilest our *Lives* are Unreformed (and the like he hath told us of *Fast-days* too) are no whit better than a *Mocking* of him. *What* Reformation hath our late Deliverance wrought among us? Are not those who were Debauched *before*, as Debauched *still*? That were Profane *before*, as Profane *still*? Are not Drunkenness and Unclean-ness, Unrighteousness and Oppression, Profanation of the Lords-day, and Contempt of Religion, as common Vices *Now*, as they were *before* this Deliverance came? Don't we hear as we pass the Streets, as Horrid Oaths and as Tremendous Curtes, and as many of these, as we heard *before*? Nay, how few in Authority seem heartily concerned for the suppressing of *any* of these Vices? And among those who have escaped, the more Gross and Scandalous

Pollutions of the World ; are not Covetousness and corrupt Selfishness, a dear love of the World, Pride and Ambition, (which as light matters as most make them, are Vices which have the most mischievous influence of *any* upon the Publick) Formality in the Worship of God, and loathsome Hypocrisy, and Placing Religion in little Trifles, compared with the plain and express Injunctions of the Gospel (in a Warm Zeal *for* them, or *against* them) Uncharitableness, bitter Strife and Emulation, as much as *ever* observable among us ? Have we *ever* known the *Form* of Godliness less accompanied with the *Power* of it, than *now* it is ; or the Spirit of Religion more decayed, and nearer *lost*, than it seems to be in most Places at this present ? Nothing is more Notorious than that, as *all* Ranks, Degrees, and Orders of men among us, have most grievously Corrupted their ways, so they *continue* still to do so, without any visible Amendment. Not *one* Order to be excepted, which is sad indeed.

But where as I said, that we seem generally no whit the *better* for our great Deliverance, I am constrained to add, that at least in *one* respect, we are apparently the *worse* for it ; namely in *this* : While we were under the Melancholy Apprehension of losing our Religion, and of Suffering in a short time for it, those who differed in *Opinion*, began to be more United in *Affection*, and to have more Charity for each other ; and Healing Discourses, both from the Pulpit and the Press, grew much in Fashion ; and Moderation was become all the Mode. And in *this* respect, the *last* Year of King *James* his Reign, I thought, was the most comfortable Year, that ever
fell

fell within *my* Memory. But *alas !* When was the Breach *wider* than 'tis *now* again ? Not only the old Nick-names and Terms of Reproach are now revived, but never did the Differing Parties make *less* Conscience of Defaming and most Shamefully Belying one another : As if they thought themselves delivered for no other end, but that they might have the more leisure, and the greater Advantages, for the *Biting and Devouring of one another.*

Now nothing of Condescension in Order to an Agreement upon Tolerable Terms, will be listned to, by the (I fear) far *major* Part on *either* side ; no not so *much* as to the satisfying each others very *just* demands : And men of Healing and Generous Principles, and whose Names have heretofore been sufficiently wounded for their Moderation, and made *Betrayers of the Church*, or of the *Government*, begin again to be abused as much as *ever.* 'Tis matter of Amazement, that so many Years Experience should convince so very *few*, of the most Pernicious Effects of Bigotry, a Stingy Narrowness, Unyielding and Inflexible Stiffness, and Furious Zeal, to both Church and State. 'Tis an Astonishing thing that at this time of day, any of us should need being fully satisfied, that if *ever* we again be made an Happy *Church*, or a Settled *State*, 'tis Christian Moderation and Mutual Condescension in *Unnecessary* and Inconsiderable things, that, by the Blessing of God, must make us so.

But was the late professed Inclination to Unity, mere *Dissembling* ? Was it rather *Stifled* than *Extinguist* Emnity ? Which like Fire that hath Rubbish thrown over it, when it breaks out again, Flames
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the more *furiously*. No, I can not, I *will* not think so; for 'tis a true Observation, that *Vexatio dat Intellectum*. Afflictions make men wise: And Expectations of them do so too. They do so, as they make us Serious, and administer Calm and Sedate thoughts; and as they check that Pride, and cool those Passions which wo'nt suffer men to see their true Interest. And moreover, there is no such *Natural* Reconciler of Persons or Parties, as a Formidable Enemy; and especially when he hath them at his Mercy. And nothing is more natural, than for *Conjunction in the same Interest*, to beget mutual Kindness: And *this* is no less observed of being *Sharers in the same Misfortunes*. Even Bears (as I have been told) that are Baited together at the same Stake, have a great Fondness for one another. But what a shame is it, that all the mighty *Gospel* Motives to Love and Unity between Christians, should have a weaker influence on Professors of Christianity, than *such* Motives as *these*? And that upon the Removal of them, all *those* Motives together should be insufficient to prevent our immediately returning to our Old Enmity. This Monstrous *Insatiation* bears a strange Resemblance with *that* of the *Jews*, before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. And God grant, that it proves not as Ominous as *that* was.

And having given you *too true* a Representation of our present Case, can we persuade our selves, that God will put up all these horrible Abuses, of his scarce to be parallel'd Kindness towards us, without a very Remarkable and a *speedy* Reformation? But alas, of such a Blessing as *this*, we see as little Ground of Hope, as *can* be: For though it is not *absolutely*,
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it seems *morally* Impossible, that a Generation of men, who have *never* been much the *better* for Judgments, but always much the *worse* for Mercies and Deliverances, should be at length Reformed by God's ordinary Methods. What should God Almighty *do* with such a People as *we are* ? As he said to the *Israelites*, Hof. 6. 4. O Ephraim, *what shall I do unto thee* ? O Judah, *what shall I do unto thee* ? He may well say to *Us* ; O England, *what shall I do unto thee* ? O London, *what shall I do unto thee* ? For your Goodness is as the Morning Cloud, and as the Early Dew, it passeth away.

How far such Motives, as I told you, God was pleased of *Old*, to be prevailed upon by, may prevail for *Us*, for the yet longer sparing us, we cannot tell : Nor can we tell how merciful he may be to us, for the sake of His *Great Name* ; or what Respect he may yet farther have to the Intercessions of those many *good* People in the Land, who sigh and mourn for the Abominations of it ; or to these *Monthly Days* of Humiliation (which Their Majesties, like Religious and Pious Princes, have obliged us to the Observance of) as they are a *Publick Owning of Him*, and Solemn Acknowledgments of his absolute Sovereignty over us, and of our ill-deserving at his hands, in the Face of the World : Or how much the Nation in general may fare the better for the truly Primitive Charity, that our poor Brethren of *France* and *Ireland* have experienced from very many, and especially in this *City* : Which God forbid should ever grow cold, so long as their Necessities call for the Continuance of it ; for that would be as *Ill* an Omen. Or whether God may still be merciful

ful to us, and prosper our Forces by Land and Sea, for the sake of that Glorious Work, he is *now* in all likelihood a doing in the World, (wherein we trust he will make our Sovereign a Blessed Instrument) we know not: Or were there a way found out, for the effectual putting our Laws in Execution against the blacker Crimes, and enforcing them with more scaring Penalties, we know not what Blessings such a *Partial* Reformation may procure for us. I understand that there is such a Way *projecting* by some Worthy Persons, to be offered to the Parliament. I pray God give his Blessing to their Pious Design.

But after all the Encouragements we can think of to *hope well*, I believe that never were truly Wise and Good Men, at such a *Stand*, nor at so great a *Loss*, as in making a Judgment, what at *last* will become of such an Untoward and Untractable, such a Murmuring and Repining, such a Fickle and Inconstant, and such a miserably Divided People, as *We* are? Who are, for the most part, as unqualified as a People well *can* be, for the perfecting of this our already great Deliverance: Who are no sooner taken out of *one* Snare, but are intangling our selves again in *others*, and are violently bent upon bringing down Misery and Confusion upon our own heads, let God Almighty do what he *will* for us: And I think I shall have the Concurrence of all Considerative People, should I say, that we never observed a more strange and wonderful Dispensation of the Divine Providence, than would be the happy Re-settling of this Church and Kingdom, after such Tossings and Tumblings, and Wild Confusions, without having the
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Way prepar'd thereto, by being again *broken all to pieces*, or by sharper Sufferings than we have yet met with: And the miserable Condition of the Kingdom of *Ireland*, and the *too bad State of Scotland*, and the Powerfulness of the Haughty Tyrant of *France*; together with the Horrible Ravages and Devastations he hath made in so many Neighbouring Countries, besides his *Own*, and the Spoils and Rapines with the *other* terrible Effects of *War and Tyranny*, which for several Years together, the most Part of *Europe* hath drank so *deep* of, and are still like to do; while *We* have onely *heard* of these things, and enjoyed great Peace and Plenty: I say, all *these* are mighty *Loud* Warnings to *Us*, so to *Fear*, as to do what lyeth in us, to *Prevent* our *Feeling* the like Miseries.

BUT (to exercise your Patience no longer) however, God may deal with this Nation as a *Nation*, or this Church, as a *Church*, particular impenitent Sinners must expect to be punish't in the *other World*, with *everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord*, and from the *Glory of his Power*: When he shall come to be *Glorified in his Saints*, and to be *admired of all them that believe*. And then they will be *all* convinc't of the Truth of that Doctrine, we have so fully proved: That when Sinners are made *miserable*, 'tis not an *Effect of God's Free Choice*. And as comfortable a Doctrine as *this* is in it self, they will find it no small Aggravation of *their Misery*.

O that all such would Consider this, and lay it well to heart, before it be *too late*: And would in

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*in this their day, know the things which belong unto their
Peace, before they be hidden from their Eyes!*

Which GOD give us all His Grace to do, for
Christ JESUS's Sake, to whom be Glory for ever
and ever. *Amen.*



FINIS.



